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Morelli, Carlo; Tomlinson, Jim

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Women and work after the second world war:
a case study of the jute industry, circa 1945-
1954

Carlo Morelli and Jim Tomlinson

Department of
Economic Studies,
University of Dundee,
Dundee.
DD1 4HN

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Women and work after the second world war: a case study of the jute industry,
circa 1945-1954

Carlo Morelli*and Jim Tomlinson** University of Dundee

- *c.j.morelli@dundee.ac.uk
- ** j.d.tomlinson@dundee.ac.uk

Correspondence address:

Professor Jim Tomlinson,
School of Humanities,
University of Dundee,
Dundee,
DD1 4HN.

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Abstract

This article examines the attempts by the Dundee jute industry to recruit women workers in the years circa 1945-1954. It locates its discussion of these attempts in the literature on the impact of the Second World War on the participation of women in the British labour market more generally, and the forces determining that participation. It stresses the peculiarities of jute as a traditional major employer of women operating in very specific market conditions, but suggests this case study throws light on the broader argument about the impact of war and early post-war conditions on women's participation in paid work.

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The long term trend of an increasing women's participation in the labour force in twentieth century Britain has been a well documented phenomenon. Specifically, the sea change following the impact of the Second World War on women's paid employment has been a staple of historical analysis and argument since the 1970s. (1) Debate has focussed on the extent to which the wartime increase in that employment marked a major turning point, and on the forces which both encouraged and discouraged the prolongation of that increase after the end of the war. The debate matters because it raises difficult analytical as well as empirical problems in attempting to understand the shaping of what is widely seen as a key moment in women's relation to the labour market. This article addresses those problems using a case study of the Dundee jute industry, for which very substantial, and largely unused, archival material exists.

From the middle of the nineteenth century jute dominated employment in Dundee and the surrounding area, and the majority of its workers were women. At the peak during the post First World War boom total employment was around 40,000 of whom two thirds were female. By 1939, like so many 'old staples,' jute had suffered prolonged mass unemployment, and the labour force was down to 30,000, of whom almost 19,000 were women. (2) Analysis of the role of women in jute is substantial for the period before 1930, but almost entirely absent thereafter. (3)

The contraction of employment in jute continued more rapidly in the war, as the industry was concentrated to free up resources for the war effort and alternative employment opportunities (including in the armed forces) expanded; by 1945 total

employment was under 14,000. As a result, at the end of the Second World War the jute industry was faced with a major problem of labour recruitment as it sought to respond to the buoyant demand which was in sharp contrast to the industry's pre-war position of almost continuous depression. (4) It is the attempts to rebuild the industry's labour force, especially amongst women, that is focused upon in this research. (5) The first section focuses upon the case of jute in the context of the general development of the labour market in Dundee, while the second examines the particular problems of recruiting women into the industry.

I

After initial disorganisation, the wartime concentration of production policy in jute was accompanied by very high levels of employment, both because of reductions in labour supply by deployment into military or war-related jobs outwith Dundee, and increased demand from munitions factories locally. (6) At its peak the munitions industry provided total employment of over 7000. (7) In some cases munitions production took both workers and factory space from the jute industry, including for example Briggs which took 1000 workers from jute and also used a jute works, the Aston works of Caird's. (8) The result was tight labour market in which output in jute fell below targets because of labour shortage. (9) Towards the end of war a process of de-concentration began, co-inciding with strong demand for jute products. But mill re-opening was slowed by the problems of getting labour back into jute. (10) This problem persisted despite the return of 11, 000 from the armed forces (including about 2000 women) and closure of almost all the munitions factories. (11)

This labour shortage persisted into the 1950s; 1954 was the peak year in post-war employment in the industry. The industry's profitability was underpinned by a minimum price form of protection operated by the Jute Control, set up in the war to control raw material use. In 1948 the Working Party on jute recommended that protection become permanent, but this was immediately and explicitly refused by the government, who saw themselves bound by the Indian Trade Agreement of 1939 to maintain free entry of Indian jute goods. Until the jute control was abolished in 1969 it progressively reduced this price protection and after its abolition protection was continued at a much lower level by quotas. (12)

. The labour shortage was responded to by the use of a registration system to track ex-jute workers and by the re-introduction of Control of Engagement Orders in 1947 which prevented ex-jute workers from being employed in other industries. (13) The industry focused its attention on trying to get back the women it had lost, though it also tried to fill gaps by recruiting more juveniles and Displaced Persons.(14) There were some limited attempts to get men to do the work previously done by women, though this was something pursued only because of the shortage of women workers; jute was not one of those industries where women workers were regarded as an aberration, with men expected to displace women on their return from the war—jute had been and was expected to continue to be predominantly 'women's work'. (15) Indeed, in Dundee more generally there was no serious question of women being forced out of jobs to give them back to returning men. Elsewhere in Britain this seems to have-mainly happened in engineering, but there was no major engineering employment in Dundee before the war, and almost all the munitions plants that opened during the war closed at its end, rather than being converted to peacetime use, largely because many of them were located in jute works which the owners wanted

back, and which in many cases were deemed unsuitable for efficient non-jute production. (16)

Why was it so difficult to recruit women into the industry in the post-war period? Here is useful to divide the problem into two. First was the problem of an overall decline in women's participation in the local labour market, albeit from levels higher than typical in most of the rest of country (17) The second was the specific problems of jute in recruiting amongst those women who did want to enter or remain in the paid labour force.

In Dundee, as elsewhere in Britain, a general decline in women's participation was partly the effect of delayed marriage and or child birth, arrears which were rapidly made up in the post-war marriage and baby boom. In the City of Dundee the birth rate rose from 15.8/1000 in 1939 to a peak of 23.1/1000 in 1947, following a rise in the marriage rate from a wartime low of 8.2/1000 in 1943 to 10.7/1000 in 1945.(18)

Of course, how marriage and child birth are related to labour market participation is a hugely controversial subject; to what extent are low participation rates to be seen as the consequence of discrimination by employers and to what extent a voluntary move by women whose aim is to give full attention to home and child. (19) More broadly how far is work participation a reflection of societal pressure on women to conform to certain norms about the proper role of wives and mothers, and how far these could be combined with paid work? Views on this in the historical context of early post-war Britain have shifted significantly. A quarter of a century ago Denise Riley referred to the 'vague but hardy feminist folk-myth' that after the war 'the government wanted women off the labour market and back to the home', and this 'myth' still surfaces, albeit in qualified form, in recent work. (20) Such views may be seen as a product of a certain kind of feminist historiography which constructed

women as victims of societal pressure, rather than as exerting their own choice. More recent work has argued that such views built upon a general belief that the role of being a housewife was so inherently unpleasant that women could only have opted for it if coerced or ‘brainwashed’, a view which may now be deemed simplistic. (21) In sum, such work has shown the ideological complexity of the place of working mothers in early post-war Britain. (22) In this article we do not attempt to draw strong conclusions on these broad issues, but rather to add new evidence from a distinctive case study.

At a national level participation rates undoubtedly partly reflected discrimination against women within many areas of the labour market. Sir Norman Kipping, Director General of Britain’s most significant employers’ organisation at the time the Federation of British Industry, echoed the widespread employers’ belief that training costs rose as a result of ‘marriage wastage’ when women were employed. Such ‘wastage’ largely explained the difficulty faced by women in finding employment in industries requiring training, especially management training. (23)

In the case of Dundee we know that, as elsewhere, ‘patriarchal’ attitudes towards married women’s employment were expressed in the early post-war years. For example, in the spring of 1945 the City Corporation’s Transport Committee debated whether women ticket inspectors, appointed during the war, could be retained. By nine votes to two it was agreed they could. Four years later the employment of a married woman in the town clerk’s office was agreed only on a temporary and exceptional basis, and as late as 1958 married women bus conductors were removed from their jobs. (24) Ideological opposition to women’s employment more generally was expressed by, for example, J. Duffy, a Labour candidate in the 1947 local elections, who said ‘he believed that in a measurable space of time

Dundee's new industries might displace jute as a primary industry. More male labour would be employed than the city had ever known, and female labour might pass to where it rightfully belonged-the home'. (25)

But such attitudes, while no doubt common, seem to have had relatively little policy effect. Certainly, the idea sometimes expressed that the proclaimed 'full employment' goal of the post-war years was aimed only at male workers finds little support in this case study. A Board of Trade official in 1946 stressed that 'They were all well aware of many of the firms coming to the city wanted women labour and they were out to see no woman in the district would be out of work'.(26) Targets for women's employment continually formed part of official discourse in the late 1940s.(27)

The capacity of women with children to work is obviously shaped in part by the availability of child care facilities. Proponents of the view that women in Britain generally were dissuaded from labour market participation in the late 1940s by government policy have pointed to the closure of wartime nurseries as indicating the obstacles put in women's way. (28) There are two general issues here. First, insofar as wartime nurseries were closed after the war, the overall impact on women's participation was probably small, given that only a very small proportion of women ever used them—most relied, as ever, on relatives and other informal types of child care. (29) Second, while an ideological desire to push women from the labour market certainly animated some policy makers, the closure of wartime nurseries was not simply an expression of such views. A considerable part was the unintended (though not necessarily unwelcome) consequence of a general post-war policy of shifting the finance of welfare provision from a wholly central government basis to a fifty-fifty

share between central and local government, and therefore putting the onus for provision on hard-pressed local councils. (30)

In Dundee the great majority of the wartime nurseries continued to operate after the war ended; the corporation's policy when the end of war time arrangements came in March 1946 was to continue to support public provision. (31) The opening hours of these nurseries were fixed to facilitate participation, especially in jute, so that when the hours in the mills were cut from 48 to 45 by cutting out Saturday working and lengthening other days, Monday to Friday nursery hours were changed to match. (32) As well as running their own nurseries, the Corporation subsidised workplace nurseries in conformity with Ministry of Health rules. (33) In general, the corporation co-operated closely with the employers on this issue, despite being subject to contrary pressures. (34) One such pressure came from nursery school teachers, seeking to reduce hours following the extended weekday opening in 1946, but the Corporation resisted any such move. (35) More powerful pressure against increased public provision came from the Ministry of Health, who refused to sanction further nursery building at the beginning of the 1950s, despite the Corporation's arguments. The Ministry of Health does seem to have been motivated, at least in part, by the view that young children should be cared for at home by their mothers, though shortage of building resources also figured in their view. (36) Nevertheless, the Corporation continued to press the case for more provision down to the mid 1950s. (37) In general, then, the local political environment in Dundee was not hostile to married women and mothers participation in paid labour.

II

What of the problems in attracting women workers faced by the jute industry? Here a number of factors can be identified. First, the dominance of jute in Dundee's pre-war industrial structure gave relatively little occupational choice to women workers. For many, working in jute was the only plausible option, and one which was not considered to be highly attractive. So the eagerness to find alternative employment when it became available was evident in the way many Dundee women voted with their feet when jobs became available in local munitions factories.

Part of the problem of attracting them back was the industry's reputation for low wages and high unemployment, and the possibility of those conditions returning. Before the war the industry had coped with falling demand in the 1930s by repeated attempts by employers to impose wage reductions and remove government restrictions on their actions imposed by the Industry Trade Boards. When this failed employers rapidly shed labour and unemployment soared.

Thus the Jute Trade Board throughout the early 1930s saw contentious debate between employers, trade unions and government appointed members over attempts to reach agreement on wage reductions, limiting unemployment and the extent of government intervention within the industry. In July 1931 industry representatives requested a special meeting with the Minister for Trade to complain about the role of government appointed members to the Jute Trade Board. The appointed members were 'either incompetent or prejudiced' in the eyes of Mr. G W Walker, the leader of the employers side of the Jute Trade Board, for their role in limiting the wage cut requested by the employers. (38) The Jute Trade Board had agreed, despite trade

union protestation, to a 4% cut across the board against employers' calls for a 4% cut for the lowest paid jute workers on minimum rates and a 10% cut for all others.

The problem employers had with a strategy of lowering wages was that the industry was already one in which low wages predominated. Employers had initially raised the question of wage reductions in December 1929 and in March 1930 introduced an agreed wage cut from 6 1/2d to 6 1/4d per hour. Thus the latest proposals represented the third attempt in less than 2 years. Yet as the Minister noted the Trade Boards were established precisely because of the continued existence of 'sweated' labour in particular industries, such as jute, and the inability of employers to negotiate with trade unions to reach agreement on the ending of such practices. As government figures indicated although almost all male workers in the jute industry were covered by minimum wage restrictions only around 25% of women jute workers were. Thus the Minister pointed out that the minimum 6d hourly rate the employers sought to cut was 'a terribly low rate for any women workers in the twentieth century'. (39)

Further despite wage cuts unemployment amongst Dundee's jute workers continued to rise. Thus, in December 1929 unemployment amongst jute workers reached 14.7%, while in March 1930 when rates were reduced unemployment was 19.6%. At the time of the Jute Trade Board on 17th January 1931 unemployment had climbed further reaching 35.6%. Perhaps still more tellingly the anger of Dundee's jute employers to the Trade Boards refusal to cut wages further saw unemployment amongst jute workers barely one week later on 26th January 1931, without any mention at the meeting of the Trade Board, soared to 52.6%. (40)

Not surprisingly trade unions' attitude to jute employers was not one of great sympathy. The April 1933 Jute Trade Board highlighted the degree to which trade

unions were hostile to increasing the autonomy of jute employers to determine pay and conditions. Representation by unions had only been achieved through three strikes in Dundee in 1912, 1916 and 1923. This representation, together with constraints imposed by the Trade Board, was not to be undermined lightly. Thus in response to suggestions that the Trade Board be abolished Mr Sime, representative of the Jute and Flax Workers Union, emphatically stated;

‘It requires an agreement to be made which is sure from our point of view, which is watertight, which will regulate wages and conditions in the trade, and contains provisions for dealing with changes. What is the way to get that done? So far as Dundee is concerned, I suggest meetings of representative of both sides. I shall oppose any request for the abolition of the Board till this is done.’ (41)

Thus industrial relations within the industry could not be described as a partnership, rather hostility from employers to trade unions seemed only matched by union’s distrust of employers.

Against this background of wage cuts and high unemployment in the early 1930s, followed by a slow and partial recovery in the later 1930s what were the perceived prospects of such conditions returning after the war? (42)

Wartime discussions were largely predicated on the unlikelihood of the industry ever regaining its former size. A Board of Trade official estimated in 1943 that post-war long-term unemployment in the city might amount to 27 per cent, made up of 10,500 men, 8,000 women and 500 juveniles. (43) Public predictions of mass unemployment were heard in the press, both national and local, with employers

understandably deprecating the impact of these on recruitment to the industry. (44)

The link between such pessimism about the industry's future and the recruitment position was a staple of employer's discussions. (45)

Expectations about the future hinged a great deal on the prospects of continuing protection from Indian competition, and here the signs were never that bright. Board of Trade officials made it clear during wartime discussions that the wartime jute control was intended as a temporary expedient, and that permanent protection should not be relied upon. (46) The concerns of the industry on protection were made clear to Sir Stafford Cripps when he visited the City and spoke to industry representatives in December 1945, but he offered no promises, telling the industry it must wait on the Report of the Working Party. (47) When it came the Working Party Report was published in 1948 it made clear the dependence of the industry on the impact of Indian competition, and called for protection. But the government was unwilling to offer this policy. (48) Alternative solutions to secure stability also failed. Thus Board of Trade attempts at gaining raw material supplies for the jute industry via a suggested 'exceptional' Ministerial visit to Pakistan in 1950 were opposed by the Committee on Commonwealth Affairs on the grounds that any such visit could create instability with India and hence risk opening debate on wider trading agreements. (49)

By 1952 it was becoming increasingly clear that the long-term stability of the Jute industry in Dundee was not easily achievable. A Board of Trade paper entitled 'Protection of the UK Jute Industry' outlined the difficulties facing government in its attempts to find mechanisms for protection:

‘Jute is probably unique in being the only substantial established UK industry whose survival is immediately threatened by Commonwealth competition, and which has no series non-commonwealth competitors.

But if Ministers feel that something must be done to keep the Dundee industry going the question of ‘how’ raises some very difficult problems... The trouble here is that the method [a tariff] that may be the right one at some indeterminate future time is certainly a method that cannot be adopted now, nor can any indication be given to the industry now that it will prove a possible future starter.’(50)

Private discussions were also taking place, within the Board of Trade by 1951, of whether or not the jute industry should be ‘thrown to the wolves’. However, fears of unemployment had to date led government to unofficially ensure an industry with capacity for 100,000 tones per annum was maintained. (51)

The industry itself made strenuous efforts to improve the image of jute. For example, the ‘Dundee made exhibitions’ sought to encourage local pride in the industry’s activity, and play up its progressiveness and bright future. (52) Other public expressions may have been less well-judged, as when the President of the Dundee Jute and linen Goods Manufacturers Association declared that ‘He wished it could be realised by the workers in mills and factories how much depended upon them and their efforts if the prospective decline in the jute industry was to be averted’ (53). But the problem for the industry was not just pessimism about the future, but its present instability. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, while an underlying labour shortage persisted, employment was seriously disrupted by periodic instability due to raw material problems Thus in November 1948 hundreds were laid off due to cuts in raw

jute supplies of 25 to 30 percent linked to political instability in India and Pakistan in the wake of independence. (54) In March 1949 the *New Statesman* reported that with 1,200 jute workers on the dole and 600 on short time ‘memories are stirring uneasily of the days when one-third of Dundee’s working population lined with their tiers of tenements’.(55) In April 1952 unemployment was 1,000 but with 2,000 on short time. (56)

The wartime pessimism about the prospects of jute led to initiatives from the City to persuade new industries to come to the area. The 1945 Distribution of Industry Act provided subsidies for this purpose, and led to the establishment of a new industrial estate to provide attractive conditions for incoming firms.(57) At the time of Cripps visit in December 1945 he combined talking to the jute industry with opening a new factory for the Expanded Rubber Company on this estate. (58) The City Corporation set up a New Industries Committee to pursue the policy of attracting new firms, and later proposed the appointment of a development officer to provide continuous support for the ‘settlement and smoothing the path of new enterprises’.(59)

In February 1946 it was reported that existing new factories employed 650 women and 850 men, and those under construction would add a further 465 and 1,350 jobs respectively. By the end of a further six months it was predicted total employment would have risen to 4,218 women and 2,945 men (60) These figures seem to have proved optimistic, but by late 1947 total number seem to have risen to 1,600 men and 1,344 women, and by early 1949 the figure was 4,000 in total (61). In a context of a labour shortage in jute these growing numbers employed elsewhere in the City were problematic for the jute employers. Mr McHugh, secretary of the local employment committee was boasting in September 1947 about Dundee’s record

for attracting new industries, which he claimed was, proportionately, a record in Britain, and by diversifying local industry meant Dundee was 'bidding fair to becoming...the Birmingham of Scotland'. (62) But only nine months later the *Scotsman* was reporting that leaders of the jute industry now wanted not only protection against Indian jute products but also 'against industries which are being introduced into the City as a matter of government policy-which in a way are being subsidised by from the public purse and are denuding the jute mills of much wanted labour'. (63)

One of the difficulties for jute, as already noted, was that it could not provide the employment stability promised by the new industries, so that in the early 1949 crisis in the industry it was suggested that half of the workers who left jute quickly found new employment in the new industries. (64)

Despite these problems, by October 1949 Harold Wilson, as President of the Board of Trade, while providing no guarantees, assured the industry that its long-term future would be protected and that in order to do so alternative employment opportunities would be limited and 'no further industrial developments would be allowed to take place in Dundee for the time being'. (65) This decision was a direct response to pressure from the jute employers, but it did not resolve the issue.

Complaints from the British Jute Trade Federal Council, other jute bodies as well as the Dundee Chamber of Commerce over the establishment of new plants and expansion of existing factories continued into the early 1950s. (66) Their problem was that the 1949 decision had not halted all new development; for example, the Board of Trade still allowed engineering companies to establish where they provided components to the major new employers like NCR. (67)

In 1952 another cyclical downturn in the industry, with unemployment rising to over 10 per cent led to the lifting of this ban.(68) This was partly a response to pressure from the Dundee MP John Strachey, but also reflected a continuing concerns in the Board of Trade about Jute's future prospects, in part because of a belief that the industry was not doing enough to raise its efficiency. (69) The debate leading up to the removal of the ban revealed strongly contrasting views in government about jute. One Board of Trade official argued that: no industry anywhere in Scotland (that) is so unpopular in its own locality as the jute industry. It is believed to have thwarted the introduction of new industries to Tayside during the 1920s and '30s because it wanted to maintain a pool of available cheap labour'. (70)

So while the reversal of the Distribution of Industry policy may be seen as a short-term success for jute manufacturers in their battle to build up the jute work force, it was a decision which it is far from clear was would have been welcomed by the workers of Dundee. (71) Dundee Trade Council took the step of writing to the Board of Trade in 1950 to counter attempts by the Dundee Chamber of Commerce to limit new industrial development in Dundee, in the case of the development of one newly proposed engineering factory. (72) One of the reasons workers were keen on the new industries was relative wages. We don't know much in detail about these relativities, but that jute offered and was seen to offer poor wages seems clear. The industry was subject to a minimum wage through the Wage Council system, itself a sign of a low wage sector. That minimum wage was, before the wage cut in 1931, 25/- for women and 39/1d for men, rising through the war years to 41s 11d for women, and 66s 1d for men until July 1945 when it increased by 6.25% (73). From January 1948 it was set at 52/6 for women, 82/0 for men, and from 1949 58/- for women and

89/6 for men (74) These are minimum rates, not earnings, and it was suggested that only about 10 per cent of jute workers only received the minimum. (75) Nevertheless McHugh, Director of the Local Employment Exchange, who was best placed to make an overall judgement, was clear that in 1947 this minimum wage compared poorly with the average local rate for *unskilled* workers. (76) He had earlier suggested that *women* workers in munitions factories had earned from 65/- up to £5 per week, substantially more than was possible in jute. (77) So though we do not know the exact figures for women's relative wages, the belief that wages were a key issue in their reluctance to work in the industry seems not to have been disputed. It was a view not surprisingly articulated by the Jute and Flax Union, but also by the Jute Controller, an ex employer in the industry (78) The wage gap between men and women in the industry seems, according to these minima, to have narrowed slightly in the late 1940s, and at the Scottish Women's TUC in Dundee in 1949 it was suggested that between 1938 and 1949 the 'average rate' for men in the industry had increased by 103 per cent, for women 137 per cent. (79) But the continuing limits of jute attractiveness were spelt out at the same meeting by the Chair, who remarked that unlike before the war Dundee now had '14 different factories doing all types of work so that lassies in Dundee would not in future find it absolutely necessary to go into jute factories' (80)

Recognition of the need to make the industry more attractive, especially to women workers can be seen if not very strongly in wages, then in other provision. (81) Most importantly, several of the big jute companies set up their own nurseries to facilitate women working in their mills. Low and Bonar seem to have been a pioneer in this within the jute industry, establishing a nursery for children aged between one and five years, charging parents 1/- per day at the end of 1947. (82) The largest

employer in the industry, Jute Industries, followed suit at its Camperdown Works from 1948 and at Manhattan Works from 1950. (83) An advert for the latter nursery claimed that the reasons for establishing it were threefold: 'The recruitment and retention of working mothers has been affected by the lack of nursery accommodation; the lack of nursery accommodation is one reason for the high rate of absenteeism' and 'the nurseries of the Public Health authority are full and there are long waiting lists'.(84) All Jute Industries nurseries closed in 1963 'due to rising costs' but by then of course the post-war labour shortage had disappeared. (85)

III

As is well known in the literature, the post-war Labour government made strenuous efforts to draw women back into the labour force. (86) The most detailed study of this issue, for cotton, showed only a limited success, but this study focussed on the weakness of the propaganda deployed for this purpose. Whatever the truth of this explanation for cotton, it seems of limited significance in jute, where there was much less of a nationally-inspired propaganda effort. (87) There were certainly parallels with cotton industry, but also differences. Both were low wage industries, but jute was distinctly worse in this respect. Both had a poor history of instability and unemployment, but jute faced peculiar problems in the post-war years in the supply of its raw materials. Another difference was the uncertainty attached to the future of jute because of the unwillingness of the government to agree to permanent protection. (88) By contrast, in cotton, the industry's post-war problems did not become serious until Japanese reconstruction and the expansion of the Indian industry led to a surge of imports in the early 1950s, with voluntary export quotas from these countries being

agreed in 1959. (89) In both industries employers were keen to attract more women. In Lancashire this led to the expansion of part-time working, while in jute there was focus on full-time work, which may explain why there was also more provision of company nurseries. Finally, it is worth noting the extent to which jute employers were willing to go to try and discourage an influx of other employers who would bid away 'their' women workers, such discouragement being, as far as the existing literature on regional policy reveals, unique to this industry. (90) The government response to this pressure was equivocal, because the Board of Trade in particular felt protection of the industry either by trade controls or seeking to guarantee its labour supply would discourage the industry's own drive for improvement. (91)

In seeking to recruit women, jute faced an uphill battle. As elsewhere in Britain women were leaving work entirely to marry and have children. The costs and benefits of doing so were affected by rising real wages for their husbands, but also, in the early post-war years by the heavy burdens of housekeeping and motherhood in an economy of shortages and rationing. The 'double burden' was rarely so heavy. (92) Evidence from many sources is that married women would prefer part-time work, but the jute employers showed little interest in this (93)

'Patriarchal' attitudes towards women, especially married women, were far from absent in Dundee in the post-war years. But the effects of such attitudes appear muted. The concerns articulated in many places about the harm done to children by absent mothers found echoes in discussions in and about the City, but with no evidence of much effect. (94) As we have seen, the policy of the City was, certainly as regards jute, to encourage women in general, but including married women, to work. The prevalent attitude may be accurately reflected in a piece in the *Scotsman* in 1956 headed 'Jute Trade's Dependence on Women Workers' which noted criticism of

‘latch-key children’, a trope of contemporary discussion on working mothers, but went on to stress ‘industry without the services of married women would collapse today just as surely as it would have done without them during the war’ (95)

Footnotes

1. A. Marwick; *Total War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1974); P. Summer field *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict* (London, 1984) and idem., *Reconstructing Women Wartime; Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, 1998); I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain* (Oxford, 2000); E. Roberts *Women and Families: an Oral History 1940-1970* (Oxford, 1995); G. Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840* (London, 2005). For a Scottish example, J. Stephenson and C. Brown 'The View from the Workplace: Women's Memories of Work in Stirling c. 1910-c.1950' in E. Gordon and E. Breitenbach (eds) *The World is Ill Divided* (Edinburgh, 1990), 7-28.
2. Board of Trade, *Working Party Reports: Jute* (London, 1948) . In 1939 about 60 per cent of Dundee's insured population were still employed in jute *ibid.*, 51.
3. E. Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850-1914* (Oxford, 1991); E. Wainwright, 'Gender, Space and Power: Discourses on working women in Dundee's Jute industry, c. 1870-1930' Unpublished PhD Dissertation, St Andrews University, 2002. W. Walker, *Juteopolis: Dundee and its Textile Workers* (Edinburgh, 1979).. There are brief discussion of later developments in Board of Trade, *Jute*, 45-7 and A. Carstairs, 'The nature and diversification of employment in Dundee in the twentieth century' in S. Jones (ed) *Dundee and District* British Association (London, 1968); idem., 'The Tayside Industrial Population' Abertay Historical Society (Dundee, 1974).
4. Unemployment in the industry had reached a peak of 52 per cent in 1932, and was still over 30 per cent in 1938. For the official wartime debate on labour supply, TNA:

PRO BT64/2882 'Jute Sack and Bag Industry: Labour Requirements' and BT64/2884 'Jute Industry: Spinning and Weaving Labour Requirements'.

5. The only parallel case is that of cotton, on which W. Crofts *Coercion or Persuasion?* (London, 1989).
6. Complaints about loss of working women to England can be found in the *Scotsman* 19 October 1942.
7. *Dundee Courier and Advertiser* (hereafter *Courier*) 30 November 1945
8. TNA: PRO BT64/3204 Board of Trade 'Dundee' August 1943; *Courier* 26 Dec 1946
9. BT 64/2884 'Jute Industry: spinning and weaving requirements' 1943-4; Dundee University Archives (hereafter DUA) Association of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers (hereafter AJSM) 84/2 Annual Reports 26th, 27th, 28th
10. See President of Jute and Linen Goods Manufacturers Association in *Courier* 20/3/46. Details on this DUA AJSM 84/8/1 meeting of Wages and Hours Sub-Committee 19 November 1943.and 30 November 1944.
11. DUA AJSM MS 84/5/4 Meetings of Special Labour Committee 31 May 1945 and 8 August 1945, 26 October and 27 December 1945; MS84/6/1 Joint Meeting of Post-War Planning and Concentration Committees 12 October 1945, *Courier* 5 June 1947;
12. S. McDowall and P. Draper 'Trade Adjustment and the British Jute Industry: a Case Study' Fraser Institute (Stirling, 1978), 1-9. For the debate on the impact of protection see A. M. Carstairs and A.V. Cole 'Recent Developments in the Jute Industry' *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 7 (1960), 117-133.

13. DUA AJSM MS84/8/1 Report of Joint Meeting of Committees of AJSM 11 April 1945; AJSM 28 Annual Report 1946; *Times* 4 May 1947 and 4 November 1947; *Courier* 19 January 1950.
14. DUA AJSM 84/6/1 Joint Meeting 12 October 1945; 84/8/1 Wages and hours Sub-Committee 16 November 1944.
15. DUA AJSM MS84/8/2 Re-instatement Sub-Committee 2 July 1945; MS84/3/3 Meeting of Spinning Firms 1 February 1946. On the national picture see Croucher *Engineers at War* (London, 1982). In Dundee the official view was that getting men to take women's jobs in jute would be a problematic venture, partly because it was assumed the workers shared the view of a very clear distinction between men's and women's jobs. TNA: PRO BT64/2884 Ministry of Supply to Board of Trade 28 December 1945.
16. E. Roberts *Women and Families: an Oral History, 1940-1979* (1995), 116-117.
17. The Manager of the Dundee Employment Exchange estimated that in 1946 3,000 fewer women were working in Dundee than in 1939 *Courier* 26 December 1946.
18. *Annual Report of the Registrar General for Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1939-1950).
19. C. Hakim, 'Five Feminist Myths on Women's Employment' *British Journal of Sociology* 46 (1995), 429-55; J. Ginn et al 'Feminist fallacies: a Reply to Hakim on Women's Employment' *British Journal of Sociology* 47 (1996), 167-77 and C. Hakim *Key Issues in Women's Work* (2nd Ed London, 2004). Note that it was estimated that 500-600 Dundee women married allied servicemen as a result of the war, and almost all of these must have left the local area.
20. D. Riley 'War in the Nursery' *Feminist Review* 2 1979, .82; see also Riley *War in the Nursery* (London, 1983); Holloway, *Women and Work*, 179-80, 183.
21. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*, 103-105.

22. D. Wilson 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: the Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain' *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006), 206-229.
23. Modern Records Centre (hereafter MRC), MSS.200/F/3/D3/17 Sir Norman Kipping interview with the Ministry of Labour Women's Consultative Committee 16th May 1949.
24. *Courier* 13 March 1945; *Courier* 3 June 1949; *Times* 17 April 1958. The marriage bar was progressively abolished in post-war Britain, beginning with the civil service in 1946.
25. *Courier* 22 October 1947
26. *Courier* 25 November 1946
27. Chair of Regional Development of Industry Panel, cited in *Courier* 6 March 1947; for later discussions TNA: PRO M. Lackey to K. Rogers 14 June 1957 who argued 'whatever the rights and wrongs of it, large numbers of Dundee households have been reliant on the earnings of women in the jute industry-many of them be it remembered, married to men also employed in the industry. The loss of these earnings will create just as serious a social problem as the loss of men's wages'..
28. Riley 'War in the Nursery'; S. Carruthers, 'Manning the Factories: Propaganda and Policy on the Employment of Women' *History* 75 (1990), 232-56. J.Tomlinson *Democratic Socialism and Economic Policy: the Attlee Years* (Cambridge, 1997), 193-7.
29. Summerfield, *Women*, 250-8.
30. For A. Bevan's defence of this policy, Hansard (Commons) vol. 420 cols 1278-9, 14 March 1946.
31. DUA AJSM 84/8/1 Wages and Hours Sub-Committee 4 February 1947; 84/2 30TH Annual Report, Report of 1948 AGM, 14-15.

32. Dundee City Archives (hereafter DCA) City Corporation Nursery Schools and Classes Sub-Committee Minutes 10 December 1946
33. DCA City Corporation Special Schemes Sub-Committee of the Health Committee Minutes 29 November 1949; *Courier* 13 October 1948
34. DCA City Corporation Health Committee Meeting with AJSM Minutes 5 December 1950; Special Schemes Sub-Committee 3 April 1951; DUA AJSM 84/2 33RD Annual Report 1951.
35. DCA City Corporation Nursery Schools and Classes Sub-Committee Minutes 16 January 1947, *Courier* 20 January 1947 and 11 March 1947. In 1950 the Corporation did refuse a request from the jute employers to lengthen the evening closure of nurseries to 10.—because of the temporary longer hours in the industry, but this was refused.
36. DCA Corporation Committee Correspondence. Department of Health to Dundee Town Clerk, 22 August 1951.
37. DCA Correspondence Medical Officer of Health to Town Clerk 22 June 1955.
38. TNA:PRO LAB 2/1703/0TB/J702/1933 Mr C.W. Walker, Leader of Employers' Side of the Jute Trade Board speaking for the Deputation to the Minister of Combined Representatives from the Employers' Side of the Jute Trade and the Association of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers, of Dundee on Tuesday, 14 July 1931, 1
39. TNA:PRO LAB 2/1703/0TB/J702/1933, Comment by the Minister for the Board of Trade to the Deputation to the Minister of Combined Representatives from the Employers' Side of the Jute Trade and the Association of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers, of Dundee on Tuesday, 14 July 1931, 5
40. TNA:PRO LAB 2/1703/0TB/J702/1933, Note to Mr Nicholson from 27 February 1931.

41. TNA: PRO LAB 2/1703/0TB/J702/2/1933, Mr Sime, Representative of the Jute and Flax Workers at the Meeting of the Jute Trade Board, April 1933.
42. Beveridge places jute in the top twelve declining between 1924 and 1937 industries in his *Full Employment in A Free Society* (London, 1944) 65-6, 322 though it is possible that it performed relatively well at the very beginning of the war as prospective demand for sandbags became evident.
43. TNA: PRO BT 64/3204 R. Maclean to Prof G. C. Allen 'Dundee' 14 August 1943
44. *Times* 15 September; 1943 *Scotsman* 3 March; 1945 *Courier* 10 March 1945 and 2 October 1945
45. DUA AJSM MS 84/8/1 Joint Meeting of Sub-Committees 11 April 1945
46. TNA: PRO BT64/3204 and BT64/ 3700 and DUA AJSM MS84/6/1 Post-War Planning Committee meeting with Dingle Foot MP 10 March 1944.
47. DUA AJSM MS 84/6/1 Meeting of Producers, Merchants, Jute Brokers and Trade Unions (with Cripps) 14 December 1945.
48. *Times* 10 June 1945; Wilson in *Scotsman* 19 June 1948; the *Courier* 17 June 1948 headlined the story 'No Protection for Jute Industry'. For the official discussion, TNA: PRO BT 64/3761 and 3762 'Jute Working Party Report: Considerations'.
49. TNA: PRO BT64/1837 Revision of Anglo-Pakistan Trade Agreement: Jute, 1950. Note by G. Bowen on discussion of Board of Trade paper to the Committee on Commonwealth Economic Affairs, 17 October 1950. Another policy idea, in line with general policy on colonial development, was to encourage the growth of raw jute in Nigeria and British Guiana, but little seems to have come of this. BT 64/1617 J. Frost 'Jute and Bag Industries and Essential Works Order' 4 July 1950

50. TNA: PRO BT11/4879 Question of Protection to Dundee Jute Industry & Repercussions in India 1952, paper by R M Howell, entitled 'Protection of the UK Jute Industry', 1 May 1952.
51. TNA: PRO BT177/522 Letter from D.F. Eades, Ministry of Materials to A.N. Halls, D.I.&R. Board of Trade 8 October 1951 and note of meeting written by G Douglas Campbell with Secretary, Sir James Helmore, Mr Calder, Mr Nowell, Mr Leckie, Mr Hewitt, 6 June 1952
52. DUA MS84/2 AJSM 30TH Annual Report 1948, 15.
53. *Courier* 15 March 1945
54. *Scotsman* 6 November 1948
55. *New Statesman* 6 November 1948
56. *Times* 25 April 1952
57. TNA: PRO BT 64/3204 Location of Industry; *Times* 15 September 1943
comments that aim of policy is to create jobs for both men and women within a more diversified structure.
58. *Courier* 15 December 1945.
59. *Courier* 19 September 1945 and 18 October 1946
60. *Courier* 21 February 1946
61. *Courier* 25 September 1947 and 1 April 1948. The Dundee based '*People's Journal*' of 23 August 1947 represented these new estates as 'Flowers and Factories will Flourish Together'.
62. New companies attracted to Dundee included National Cash Registers TNA: PRO BT177/856 National Cash Registers (Manufacturing) Ltd. Dundee. and *Courier* 16 March 1946; Timex BT177/1228 Timex Ltd, branch of US Time Corporation, Craigie, Dundee'; *Courier* 23 December 1946; Courtaulds *Courier* 19 November

1946. For an overall summary TNA: PRO BT177/1220 'Jute Industries Ltd., Craigie, Dundee'.

63. *Scotsman* 25 September 1947 and 12 June 1948. For employer complaints DUA AJSM MS84/233rd Annual Report 1951, 17-18.

64. *Courier* 27 January 1949

65. TNA: PRO BT177/522 Letter from D.F. Eades, Ministry of Materials to A.N. Halls DIR Board of Trade 8 October 1951 and Board of Trade letter to Jute Trade Federal Council quoted in *Scotsman* 19 April 1950

66. TNA: PRO BT177/522 letter from R.W Matthewson, Secretary of The British Jute Trade Federal Council to D.F Eades of Ministry of Materials 26 September 1951 objecting to the support for relocation of British Oxygen and V&A Jigs & Tools Co. to Dundee.

67. TNA: PRO BT 64/1605 W. Walker, Raw Jute Emergency Committee, to Mr Valentine, Jute Controller 21 February 1950.

68. TNA: PRO BT 177/1358 Board of Trade 'Removal of Ban on New Industry in Dundee Area' 5 March 1953.

69. Ibid., G.D. Campbell 'Notes for Discussion with President of Board of Trade...about ban on new Developments in Dundee' 23 October 1952.

70. Ibid., G.D. Campbell 'Dundee: Ban on New Industries' 11 August 1952.

71. *Courier* 2 June 1946; for a trade union view that more should be done to attract new industries, TNA: PRO LAB 2/1703/0TB/J702/1933 , DCA City Corporation Special Committee on Establishment of New Industries 17 Oct 1946.

72. TNA: PRO BT177/522 David Bowman of Dundee Trades Council letter to Board of Trade on the complaint raised by Dundee Chamber of Commerce over CVA Tools & Jigs Co move to Dundee, 27th March 1950.

73. C. Craig, J. Rubery, R. Tarling and F. Wilkinson *Abolition and After: the Jute Wages Council* Department of Employment Research Paper No 15 (London, 1980), 1-9.
74. *Courier* 22 November 1947; *Scotsman* 9 December 1949.
75. *Scotsman* 9 December 1949
76. DUA AJSM 84/8/1 Wages and Hours Sub-Committee meeting with Mr McHugh 13 June 1947.
77. DUA MS84/3/3 AJSM Meeting of Spinning Firms, 1 February 1946.
78. TNA:PRO BT 64/3700 Dundee and District Union of Jute and Flax Workers to Secretary of AJSM 9 November 1945'; idem., 'Confidential Memorandum on Jute Spinning and Weaving Industry in Dundee and district' by Jute Controller' October 1945.
79. *Scotsman* 28 November 1949. Resistance to equal pay was articulated by the employers at the time of the Royal commission in 1945. DUA 84/8/1 AJSM Wages and Hours Sub-Committee 7 August 1945
80. Ibid.
81. DUA AJSM 84/2 33RD Annual Report 1951, 17
82. *Courier* 10 December 1947
83. DCA City Corporation Special Schemes Sub-Committee Minutes 5 September 1950; *Courier* 25 July 1949
84. DCA City Corporation Correspondence file 'Jute Industries Limited Nurseries: Manhattan Nursery' n.d.
85. DCA Correspondence file Jute Industries Limited to Medical Officer of Health 18 April 1963.
86. Carruthers, 'Manning the Factories'.

87, Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion?*

88. Unlike in the Lancashire cotton case, we know little about the political economy of the protection issue in jute. The issue was deemed of sufficient importance to reach cabinet level in both 1957 and 1963—see TNA: PRO CAB 134/1675 Economic Policy Committee Board of Trade ‘Dundee Jute Industry’ 10 May 1957 and Secretary of State for Scotland ‘Dundee Jute Industry’ 10 May 1957, discussed in PRO CAB134/1674 Minutes of Economic Policy Committee 15 May and 28 May 1957, and PRO CAB 129/88 Cabinet Papers ‘Jute Industry’ 15 July 1957. For 1963 CAB 129/114 Board of Trade ‘Import Policy for Jute Goods’ 30 July 1963 and Sec of State for Scotland ‘Import Policy for Jute Goods’ 30 May 1963, this time the issue went to full Cabinet: CAB 128/37 Minutes 1 August 1963,

89. J. Singleton, ‘Lancashire’s Last Stand: Declining Employment in the British Cotton Industry, 1950-70’ *Economic History Review* 39 (1986), 100-101.

90. For example, the issue does not come up at all in D.W. Parsons, *Political Economy of British Regional Policy* (London, 1986).

91 TNA: PRO BT64/5101 Board of Trade ‘Jute Industry: Note on Future Level of Output’ 21 August 1954. Also, distribution of industry policy was explicitly aimed at diversification in areas where one industry domination threatened instability of employment—precisely the problem of Dundee. TNA: PRO BT64/3761 Board of Trade ‘The Jute Industry in Relation to Distribution of Industry Policy’ 12 February 1948.

92. *Courier* 31 October 1946; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity*

93. Roberts *Women and Families*, 122. There is surprisingly little discussion of this issue in the records, but in 1943 it was noted that only just over 1 per cent of

employment in jute was part-time. TNA: PRO BT64/2884 F. Cathro to Ministry of labour 7 August 1943.

94. For the national position see Mass Observation *War Factory* (1943, reprinted 1987) and G. Thomas *Women and Industry* Social survey for the Ministry of Labour and National Service (1948).

95. *Scotsman* 15 February 1956